

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

a pair of opposing handles, each configured to be gripped by a person's hand; and
~~attachment means~~ a corset or harness for attaching the pair of opposing handles adjacent to a child's body on opposite sides of a child's body so as to lie on a central balancing plane during use,

the ~~corset or harness attachment means~~ being configured so that at least one handle lies next to a child's body or clothing while the restraint device is worn so that a hand gripping the handle remains close to the child's body during use and so that at least a portion of the hand gripping the handle is disposed between at least a portion of the handle and the child's body,

~~the handles being~~ each handle having a loop that extends vertically between upper and lower edges of the corset or harness and sized so as to allow insertion therein of at least three fingers of a person using the device to hold or restrain a child,

the handles extending laterally away from a surface of the ~~corset or harness attachment means~~ corset or harness so as to provide an opening into which a person can readily insert fingers without spreading the handles apart from the ~~corset or harness attachment means~~, corset or harness

at least one handle being permanently attached to the ~~corset or harness attachment means~~ corset or harness to prevent inadvertent detachment of the at least one handle from the ~~corset or harness attachment means~~ corset or harness to protect a child from being accidentally dropped during use of the restraint device.

2. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, ~~the handles comprising at least one loop~~, the loop comprising at least one of a fabric, plastic, elastomer, metal, ceramic, or composite material, the loop having an opening that accommodates insertion of four fingers therethrough while gripping the loop.

3. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the corset or harness attachment means comprising a single sheet or strap of a flexible material configured so as to wrap at least partially around a child's body.

4. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the corset or harness attachment means comprising a plurality of straps configured so as to wrap at least partially around a child's torso or limbs.

5. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the corset or harness attachment means comprising one or more fastening devices configured so as to releasably attach the attachment means to a child's body.

6. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 5, the fastening devices comprising one or more of a hook and loop system, a buckle, a tie, a snap, a latch, or a ratchet.

7. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the corset or harness attachment means configured and the handles positioned relative to the corset or harness attachment means so as to position one of the handles at or near a child's spine and the other of the handles at or near the child's sternum.

8. (Currently Amended) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, the corset or harness attachment means configured and the handles positioned relative to the corset or harness attachment means so as to position the handles so that both lie on a central balancing plane that passes through a child's spine and sternum or a central balancing plane that passes through a child's left and right shoulders.

9. (Previously Presented) A restraint device as defined in claim 1, further comprising a head restraining system comprising a concave region configured to receive and engage at least a portion of a child's skull region in order for the head restraining system to restrain the child's head in a desired position relative to the child's body when the head restraint system is in use.

10. (Previously Presented) A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position and in a balanced fashion with a single hand of a person desiring to restrain the child, the restraint device comprising:

a flexible corset or harness sized and configured so as to wrap around at least a portion of a child's body, wherein the corset or harness comprises a plurality of flexible straps that are laterally spaced apart that wrap at least partially around the child's torso but that expose at least a portion of the child's body between the flexible straps so as to permit washing of the exposed portion of the child's body between the flexible straps;

at least one fastening device connected to the corset or harness that permits selective fastening and unfastening of the corset or harness around at least a portion of the child's body; and

a handle, extending laterally away from the flexible corset and configured to be gripped by a person's hand, permanently attached to a location on the corset or harness in a manner so that the handle is positioned next to the child's body or clothing adjacent to the spine, sternum, stomach or chest of the child's body when the restraint device is in use, so that a hand gripping the handle remains close to the child's body when the restraint device is in use, and so that at least a portion of the hand gripping the handle is disposed between at least a portion of the handle and the child's body adjacent to a central balancing plane of the child's body passing through the child's spine or sternum during use.

11. (Previously Presented) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the handle comprising a loop having an opening that easily accommodates insertion of at least three of a person's fingers therethrough while gripping the loop.

12. (Original) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the handle having sufficient friction that it can be reliably gripped without significant slippage when contacted with soapy water.

13. (Original) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness comprising at least one of a fabric, plastic, elastomer, metal or composite material.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, the corset or harness further comprising one or more flexible straps sized and configured so as to wrap around at least one of a child's shoulders or legs.

17. (Previously Presented) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, further comprising a head restraint device comprising a concave region configured to receive and engage at least a portion of a child's skull region in order for the head restraint device to restrain the child's head in a desired position relative to the child's body when the restraint device is in use.

18. (Original) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, wherein the fastening device comprises at least one of a hook and loop system, a buckle, a tie, a snap, a latch, or a ratchet.

19. (Original) A restraint device as defined in claim 10, further comprising a second handle attached to the corset or harness in a manner so that the second handle is positioned at or near a central balancing plane on an opposite side of the child's body relative to the handle when the restraint device is in use.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of holding or restraining a child in a desired position while giving the child a bath, comprising:

releasably attaching a restraint device to a torso of the child in order for at least one strap of the device to be circumferentially wrapped around the torso and so that a handle attached to the at least one strap extends laterally away from the strap so as to provide an opening into which fingers can be inserted and is positioned at or near a central balancing plane of the child's body between the child's head and buttocks and so that a portion thereof extends laterally away from the child's body to facilitate gripping of the handle; and

gripping the handle with a first hand so as to hold or restrain the child in at least one of a sitting, standing or upright position within a container or basin that holds therein a quantity of water in order to prevent the child from falling over; and

washing the child with a second hand while gripping the handle with the first hand.

21. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, the child being held in at least one of a sitting or standing position during at least a portion of time in which the child is held or restrained within the container or basin.

22. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the handle is attached adjacent to the child's spine or sternum.

23. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the handle is attached adjacent to the child's side.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 20, further comprising releasably attaching a second handle on a side of the child's body opposite the handle so that the second handle is positioned at or near the central balancing plane of the child's body.

25. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 24, further comprising gripping both handles while lifting the child into or out of the container or basin.

26. (Original) A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the container or basin comprises a bath tub.

27. (Currently Amended) A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

a flexible corset or harness sized and configured so as to wrap around at least a portion of a child's body;

at least one fastener connected to the corset or harness that permits selective fastening and unfastening of the corset or harness around at least a portion of the child's body; and

a releasable handle, configured to be gripped by a person's hand, positioned next to the child's body or clothing adjacent to the child's spine, sternum, stomach or chest so that a hand gripping the handle remains close to the child's body when the restraint device is in use and so that at least a portion of the hand gripping the handle is disposed between at least a portion of the handle and the child's body, the releasable handle comprising:

a pair of straps, each having a first end permanently attached to the corset or harness, that may be selectively connected and unconnected and that form a loop when selectively attached; and

releasable and reconnectable attachment means, attached to second ends of the straps opposite the first end, for selectively connecting and unconnecting the pair of cooperating straps so as to selectively form and unform the loop.

28. (Currently Amended) A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

a flexible corset or harness sized and configured so as to wrap around at least a portion of a child's body;

at least one fastening device connected to the corset or harness that permits selective fastening and unfastening of the corset or harness around at least a portion of the child's body;

a handle attached to the corset or harness in a manner so that the handle is positioned adjacent to the child's body and between the child's head and buttocks when the restraint device is in use, the handle being configured to be gripped by a person's hand so that at least a portion of the hand gripping the handle is disposed near the child's body; and

a head restraint device comprising:

a head engaging member having a concave region configured to receive and engage at least a portion of a child's skull region in order for the head restraining device to attach to a child's head and restrain the child's head in a desired position relative to the child's body when the restraint device is in use;

a first restraint strap extending from the head engaging member to a rear portion of the flexible corset or harness; and

a second restraint strap extending from the head engaging member to a front portion of the flexible corset or harness.

29. (Currently Amended) A restraint device for use in holding or restraining a child in a desired position, comprising:

a flexible corset or harness comprising one or more straps sized and configured so as to wrap around at least a portion of a child's body;

at least one fastener connected to the corset or harness that permits selective fastening and unfastening of the corset or harness around at least a portion of the child's body;

a central balancing handle, configured to be gripped by a person's hand, attached to the corset or harness in a manner so that the handle has a loop, all or most of which is disposed between upper and lower edges of the flexible corset or harness, so as to be positioned next to the child's body or clothing and so as to lie lies on a central balancing plane of the child's body that passes through either (i) the child's spine and sternum or (ii) the child's shoulders and at least partially between the child's head and buttocks so that a hand gripping the handle remains close to the child's body and lies on a central balancing plane of the child's body when the restraint device is in use;

optionally, an opposing balancing handle positioned on an opposite side of the flexible corset or harness relative to the central balancing handle having a loop, all or most of which is disposed between the upper and lower edges of the flexible corset or harness, such that the restraint device consists of either one hand gripping handle consisting of the central balancing handle or two hand gripping handles consisting of the central balancing handle and the opposing balancing handle; and

at least one of:

one or more strips of a cushioning material disposed on at least a portion of an inner surface of the one or more straps so as to shield and protect soft, sensitive skin of a baby or young child from the one or more straps when in use, the cushioning material comprising at least one member selected from the group comprising fleece, felt, other soft and flexible fabrics, silicone, other polymeric gel materials, polyurethane foam, and other soft and flexible foam materials, or

a friction enhancing material disposed on at least a portion of an inner surface of the one or more straps so as to decrease the tendency of the restraint device to move in an unwanted fashion relative to the child's body when in use.